K Swing (t.) C 4

LETTERS

TO THE

ESTIMATOR

OF THE

MANNERS and PRINCIPLES of the TIMES.

By ONE who has ſerved the STATE.

Sed miſerere tui, rabido nec perditus ore
Fumantem naſum vivi tentaveris urſi. MART.

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LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

The Author's Hiſtory of himſelf.

THO' I ſhall treat you Sir, with freedom, I owe you ſo much reſpect as to tell you the occaſion of theſe letters; and who it is that writes them. The reſpect is due to you as a gentleman and ſcholar; much more as an Engliſhman: the freedom follows, becauſe you have diſgraced the firſt of thoſe characters, proſtituted the ſecond, and profaned the laſt.

Tho' it may ſeem ridiculous to you, I reverence my country. The inſults ſhe has received from you demand reſentment from ſome of her honeſt children: and I hope it will not come improperly from me, whom ſhe has diſtinguiſhed for her ſervice, in an employment that defies compaſſion.

Myſelf alſo, am injured by you in the tendereſt point, my office. You plainly are ſupplanting me; and you have the the hardineſs to own it. Tho' thro' a falſe delicacy you evade the name, you have aſſumed the employment: be free with yourſelf, you who are free with others: if you do not bluſh at the taſk, never boggle at the title. Why call yourſelf PROVOST *? Speak the plain language of your country: I deſpiſe FRANCE as much as you do BRITAIN: the Engliſh of PROVOST is Hangman.

You know now what he is who writes to you; for though my name may not have yet reached your ears, any

* See Eſtimate, Vol. II.

more

more than my knife, my office is familiar to you. Perhaps hereafter we may be more perfectly acquainted.

In the mean time, that you may not ſuppoſe yourſelf degraded by the meaneſs of your antagoniſt, and retort *Provoſt* to me, as you did *Footman* to a late diſputant, 'tis proper I remind you,

Worth makes the man,

be the ſtation what it will: and I ſhall acquaint you farther, that as your own choice has placed you in my ſtation, *Whiper* and *Hanger* of the ſtate; the purpoſe of my parents was to have raiſed me to your's. Hangman as I am, I was intended for the church: my education was like your's; and I have been floged into ſome hard words that I never ſhall forget.

The old women of our family thought I ſhould have done honour to the gown; but the men who knew more of the world, judged otherwiſe. I was too fond of books, and had no intereſt: ſo they put me into another courſe of fortune. I was deſtined to the law; and I thank

heaven I have attained the top of my profeſſion: but the road to it has been, *Per varios caſus, per tot diſcrimina rerum*, that you muſt not wonder I am reſolute not to part with my office. I was not placed above the reach of follies: *humanum eſt*; and in my ſtudies I was not without them. But whether I had a babbling landlady who told of them, or whether envy led my brother ſtudents to the ſecret, they were blown, and I was public with them.

'Tis needleſs to ſay thro' what ſcenes I ran afterwards: nor is it worth your while to know how I was in ſucceſſion clerk to a methodiſt, and mouth to a puppet-ſhow: how I ſwept guineas at Bath, and kennels in Thames-ſtreet! Why ſhould I recount my ſervices to Walpoles and to Pelhams? my intimacies with *Cherubim* and *Bob?* —Days that never will return! It matters not to you, nor to the world, that it was I who fed the Tartar elephant and the Mogul Rhinoceros; the *Cam.* and *Drom.* of happier periods:

periods: and that 'twas I who nurſed my lady Faddle's *Shock*. That I was guardian to *Chloe's* honour, till marriage made her a woman of quality; or that I became a proſtitute author in the hands of the bawd bookſellers.

I was the ſoldier *Quid* who toſſed the Latin back not unaccompanied into my maſter's face: 'twas I who got the round half crown for baiting Ticklepitcher's hook in Latin, a fiſh-boy when he angled after gudgeons. I was the beggar-brat who chalked upon the palace-wall Jocaſta's faithful menace,

Poenas ſolvet graves——
Regnabit.——Eſt haec poena.

you know the conſequence. I was cupper *Tom* at the hedge-bagnio, who told your reverend friend in Greek his rakehell grandſon was coming in; but he was caught, becauſe he did not underſtand me.

Theſe

Theſe are the annals of the man you have injured: and can you think it will be taken calmly? is this a bear to ſeize by the warm noſe with unbit fingers?

From theſe ſtrangechanges, by a thouſand chances from Convent-garden ſteps to Newgate-ſtairs, in all the regular ſucceſſive courſe of things, I have at length attained the heigth of my profeſſion, appointed FINISHER OF THE LAW: and do you think I ſhall permit a little dainty white-gloved parſon, a ſinging, ſtruming, prating, petty prieſt to ſhare the honour with me? nay, to uſurp it from me! Sir, know yourſelf and me: Deſiſt, acknowledge your offence, if you hope mercy; and follow your ideal provoſt-trade no more, if you expect to keep out of my real clutches.

I am with due regard,

your Brother Executioner,

SWITHIN SWING.

LET-

LETTER II.

Of the Origin and Dignity of the office of Hangman.

I Need not tell you, O moſt perfect in your office! that the province of executioner which you have aſſumed, comprehends within it all the leſſer puniſhments. There is no need to quote our our *omne majus* to you who are a ſcholar; nor to inform you of the extent of your office, who have ſo laviſhly performed it all.

Nay, it becomes me, though I may be thought to envy you, to own you have in the time another might employ upon, a ſimple whiping, gone thro' the complete rounds of our profeſſion. It muſt be owned you have cut your country to the bone, led public virtue to the ſcaffold, and hung up national ſpirit.

Let

Let us review the exploits of this ſhort period diſtinctly.

You have broke our conſtitution on the wheel; whiped the revolution at a cart's tail; and hanged up limited government. Nor have bodies of men eſcaped you better: you have burnt the clergy in the hand; keelhawled the navy; and made the Britiſh army run the gauntlet. 'Twill not be decent to ſay publicly, whom you have whiped in private, in your firſt work; but certainly you have pillored two houſes in the latter: if pillory be public ſhame; and it be ſhame to be accuſed of violating the great property which they were choſen to defend.

This unremitted fury in your office we allow; but now 'tis time to aſk who gave you the authority? who put into your hands theſe knives and cords, and laid before you PROVOSTSHIP this nation of MARAUDERS.

'Tis time you ſhould be told, that Hangman is an office in the ſtate to which

men

men muſt be raiſed by their knowledge and their virtues: to which they muſt not be ſelf-appointed; but voted by their country.

When *Savage* ſung his tributary praiſe and called himſelf a *volunteer Laureat*, Cibber, (whoſe name tears follow,) told him, the Laureat was ſuch by the royal appointment; and he might as decently have hung on a blue ribband, and called himſelf a volunteer knight of the garter.

I ſhall no more ſuffer, Sir, theſe inſults and infringements in my office; as much ſuperior to the other as action is to eloquence; and it ſeems ſtrange that I muſt tell you, who ought to know the nature of the employment you have aſſumed, that you are equally ignorant of its origin, and dignity. In importance to eſtate, I ſuppoſe it may vie with any office whatſoever; and in antiquity it can yield to none, unleſs your learned friend have encreaſed his Second Edition almoſt one half by a new hiſtory.

The firſt expedition of which we have an account in profane ſtory, furniſhes an inſtance of the firſt execution. MYASDEUS, a wit among the heroes, wrote a lampoon upon company, in which he called Jaſon a cutpurſe, and Theſeus a cuckold. Hiſtory, unfaithful to his memory, has loſt the reſt: but for this he was hanged by BERION chaplain of the ſhip, upon the prow of the veſſel. By this we learn two ſtriking anecdotes, that the firſt hangman was a prieſt, and the firſt execution was performed upon the body of an author.

In what eſtimation the office was held among the later Greeks I need not ſay to you, who are a maſter, of antient and modern learning equally, or how the Romans reverenced their excutioners. In the kingdom of *Viſapour* none can be called to the crown who has not ſerved as hangman; and in the days when wit and talents were regarded here, our Charles the Second, when he could not prevail

with

with his miniſter to make a very brave man, lieutenant-colonel, gave him a brevet for Provoſt-Marſhal; and told him he would find it an equivalent.

This is the office you have uſurped from me: and they ſelf-conſtituted you are out-hanging the buffoon in the play: but can you conceive this right or reaſonable; becauſe coujurer ALLEN has changed plain WARBURTON to Mr. DEAN WARBURTONIANUS, do you ſuppoſe his *Geta* muſt inſtantly become DON GETIANUS? and when he occupies the ſeat of ſtate, for want of criminals may hang his officers!

The people are not in a humour to be quartered at preſent: or if they were, I ſhould not truſt the knife to you. You have too little feeling.

'Tis ſaid men frequently miſtake their talents; and never was a ſtronger inſtance than in you. Ambition has confirmed the

error of your judgement: and it is vainly you ſtrive to whip and brand a people creditably, who might ſay, *bleſs we beſeech thee* at lords tables without reproach; or

Tunefully torment the reſin'd ſtring,

accompanied with the half eunuch voice in concert, till they would have dyed at your melody, who ſleep over your executions.

But if you had been better qualified, why, I deſire to know, ſhould I reſign my office. I who have branded ladies of high name, and ſcourg'd the dark ſtairs at the feet of men of parts and faſhion: I who have turned authors of more repute than many ſuch as you are, from the ladder! Have I not paſſed without reproach through my great office? Have I not obtained the popular dignities attending on the higher operations, and have I not performed the whole with reputation!

Did any one whom I diſpatch'd, ever return to upbraid me with the imperfec-

tion

tion of my hand: there is not an instance. But of the millions who have ſuffered under your uſurpation, not one is ſatisfied. Guilty and innocent have been impaled together; and you have not given one fair or decent execution: all are mangled, but there is no murder. 'Tis happy the ſentence as well as its execution were your own: I know no court in England would be ſatisfied with it.

But 'tis not fit we leave you this excuſe: for tho' you have never condeſcended to declare your purpoſe, all ſee it. We know where the aim is taken, by the muzzle of the blunderbuſs. You plainly meant to have ſtruck off the head of the *ſtate*; when your blow glanced upon a wart, the *church*; and none can doubt you meant to have ſplit the two Reviews from head to chine; when your broad ſabre fell without an edge, flat upon the ſeat of honour.

After theſe miſcarriages, I can by no means admit you as my collegue in office;

fice; but as you ſhew a heart fit for the ſervice, however deficient your hand may be at preſent, I think you ſhould be turned off without ſome notice. Tho' poets be born poets, the Provoſt is not born a Provoſt; he muſt go through the proper ſtages who would perfect himſelf in the profeſſion; and as I am apprehenſive an accident will befal my deputy next ſeſſions, I ſhall give you your refuſal of the vacancy. There is no other way to the knowledge of our art: and tho' your ambition will not at firſt be ſatisfied; there will be vaſt amuſement and ſatisfaction. I ſhall give you bodies upon which to practiſe in ſtill-life, till you are fit to quarter in pulbic; and you will have the ſupream pleaſure of mangling the moſt perfect of the Almighty's works, without murmur or reproach. The ſubjects ſhall no more complain than patients of their doctors; and no hair-brained politician ſhall accuſe you; no hardy bookſeller ſhall ſell your reputation. You ſhall be lodged where no idle goſſip ſhall

pry

pry into your ſecret amuſements; and if malice would accuſe you of chaſtiſing your diſobedient Veſtal, there ſhall not be in the place that ridiculouſly pretended inſtrument of your rage, a pair of bellows.

This is the courſe of our education; and this is the ſole method by which you can with ſafety, and without reproach, attain the eminence at which you have aimed. You will acknowledge it is generous in me to offer this whom you have endeavoured to ſupplant: but I ſee you have genius. England may want an Executioner; and heaven forbid I ſhould value my own emolument when I think of my dear country.

I am, SIR,

your friend and ſervant,

SWITHIN SWING.

LET-

LETTER III.

Of the Eſtimator's Behaviour in his Office.

SIR,

I Have condemned your conduct in executions, tho' I own your heart a good one for the ſervice: and it would be impoſſible that I, who love my country, ſhould be ſatisfied to ſee her mangled, tho' it ſhould have been done by a more judicious hand; becauſe you have made yourſelf accuſer and evidence, judge, jury, and executioner.

The law is too reſpectable a power to be put into your hands or mine, or any other hangman's in the univerſe: and let me add it is too terrible. If thoſe who have the power you have uſurped, ſhould be jealous of truth, and of their own authority, we might perhaps ſee a whimſical execution; which would neither excite the pity of the mob, nor call down their reproaches on the judges.

They

They would return you insults who you had insulted; and what Englishman could be silent? The regions of Grubstreet would ring with acclamations; here is the *Provost* proved *marauder*; or the executioner executed: the North-Briton would tell you of him who invited the maiden; and schoolboys would be pelting you with scraps of Latin.

——*Nec lex est justior ulla*
Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.

If this actual sentence fail, at least we shall see a kind of poetic justice executed on you: The public, before whom you assume the title NATIONAL PREACHER, will call you *national prater*; and I whose office you have scandalized, tell you, you do not know the dignity of national hangman.

The seats of learning which you have disgraced will whip you harder for your example than your censures; and the thistle Reviewers, if I do not very

much miſtake their character, will give you a ſtab for every new mark of vanity: if there be room about for ſo many wounds. If their thorns want point, now they will be blunt for ever.

So far as regards my own caſe, let me review your conduct. I ſhall anticipate their ſentence no farther; yet I think this is all: for take you from the ax and halter, and we ſhall leave you nothing. Your accuſations fly too boldly in the face of truth and reaſon to be heard; and 'tis your puniſhments alone that attract our notice.

Twice you have mounted the joint-ſtool of oratory: end calling the world about you, have declared your office; and aſſumed anthority to arraign, condemn, and execute, withont appeal or tryal. Your firſt harangue, which we ſuppoſed a libel, you have aſſured us is a ſermon; and in the ſecond, quitting an office for which the world has found

you

you little qualified, you have assumed one to which you are much less equal. Sinking the Ordinary in the executioner. Canterbury twice vacant, and you not raised to it? 'tis not a wonder you suppose yourself NEGLECTED. As no lawn sleeves came, you have pulled on the hangman's fustain; and it is not wonderful the great ax falls there where the offence lies; on the great: for it is they who have neglected your transcendent virtue. Bolingbroke, whom you quote, smiles; at once enjoying your conversion, and despising you: the ghost of Shaftsbury laughs to see your own fury let loose against that order, which you so vainly have been thought to have defended against his keener weapons.

The ingratitude of your country has cured you of the idle thought of serving her; and from her monitor you are become so far as your weak and ill-aimed blows can wound, her muderer.

You ſtand forth now the PROVOST (ſo you declare yourſelf) of this great army of mankind; and hang upon the next tree (permit me on ſo ſingular an occaſion to borrow your own words,) the marauding church and ſtate. The heads of colleges and rulers of the people, generals and admirals, dangle together on the unrelenting bough; and the whole nation condemned, though reſpited till there be place and means of execution. Only one man eſcapes: one has your admiration and applauſe: it is the true, the proper, and the great political writer, who without fear or wit, aſſumes the national voice, and leads the people.

Merit is always modeſt: but I muſt not leave the character ſo highly and ſo warmly finiſhed in obſcurity. It is the author's ſelf. The Eſtimator thinks this of the Eſtimator; and tho' his unconquerable baſhfulneſs could not prevail with itſelf to write the name to the picture, 'tis fit the ſuperficial public ſhould be told, who 'tis they are to reverence.

So

So you ſtand forth in this your ſecond piece; great, important, deciſive, and oracular: yourſelf the text; and your own the comment. An eſtimator of the manners, who yourſelf want better; a prieſt with Machiavel for your bible.

This is your portrait by a ſtranger's hand: and it will laſt as long as there are eyes or characters; colours or canvaſs. It is thus they repreſent you who love their country, and reverence her conſtitution; who glory in her preſent ſucceſſes, and who promiſe themſelves more: whoſe deteſtation follows their juſt opinion of the worth of Britons, and of your worthleſs thoughts of them. Your's as before, S. S.

LETTER. IV.

FORGIVE me, Sir, that I was once ſevere: when I ſee you writing a ſecond work with the profeſſed view of praiſing the firſt, I bluſh at my former indignation; and anger ſoftens into compaſſion.

Can

Can I have been ſo raſh to ſtrike a fly that meant only to ſhew its burniſhed wings, when it bedawbed the flower on which it had been raiſed from a reptile? Can I have reproved with harſhneſs the poor proſtitute, who, while ſhe called the Gunnings, Graftons, and Eſſexes deformed and ugly, meant only to bring her ſmall ſtock to the better market?

Can it be poſſible, poor man! that you whom we ſuppoſed reviling and inſulting the community, and its chief members, in the very vehemence of bad opinion, was only the light and frivolous coxcomb who denyed others wiſdom, with only to claim the character of wiſe? Who accuſed the world of want of honeſty, only that you yourſelf might be eſteemed upright without a rival? —Make this appear? —But, why do I ſay that? you have made it appear already! own it, that there may be no farther cavil; and I will own in fellow-humiliation,

tion with you, that I miſtook: that what I called a miſchievous character, was only a ridiculous one: that I have broke a butterfly upon the wheel, and indulged reſentment, where there was no cauſe for any thing but pity.

Are you whom I eſteemed the rigid and ſevere enemy of this frivolous age, yourſelf a moſt egregious trifler? and is the outrageous cenſure of the world only a blind to diſguiſe the ſame foibles in your private conduct? How have I miſ-applied reproof! 'Tis my misfortune not to know you perſonally: I can but aſk if common fame ſay true; and if it be ſo, you need but to own it, and the offended public will ſmooth the brow, and with a ſmile forgive you.

Fineſſe is univerſal thro' the world.—Deceit we uſed to call it: but your favourite French have taught us manners. Fineſſe is the acknowledged art of one half of the world, and the abſolute glory

of

of the other: and can it be ſuppoſed, that they will blame ſeverely what they ſo readily practice, and ſo frequently approve in others. Confeſs the truth, and we will laugh with you. We will remember that none among the other ſex are ſo furious againſt certain failings in their friends as thoſe who have themſelves triped at the ſame ſtone: we will remember, that in common life the bravo never fails to be a coward; and that nothing betrays drunkenneſs like over-acted ſobriety.

We will acknowledge, the man who talks loudeſt of great qualities is he who wants them moſt: and that 'tis therefore he talks of them. That preaching pedantry is ſet forth to hide hypocriſy and ignorance; and patriotiſm when it roars loudeſt, means, who bids the moſt? Recollecting this, we ſhall turn the reproach upon our own blindneſs: we ſhall bluſh for ourſelves, and allow you, what even your divine friend himſelf has not yet

added

added to your excellent qualities, address, that could impose upon a people.

None will blush more than I shall who mistaking you for a wrongheaded mischievous enflamer of the people, find you an innocent flatterer of yourself; and see in the place of a turbulent patriot, the most harmless, tho' most ridiculous of all human characters, a coxcomb.

But, is this true?—Don't suffer me to indulge my imagination in a second error! tell me, whether your acquaintance rally us again, or whether they speak truth! whether or not it be the real Estimator of the manners of a people, who, when he has left the national preacher in his closet, fiddles and sings, and dances in the mixed assembly. There is no crime in this: and they betray their ignorance who laugh at you. Which of the canons says it is a crime to have a voice? or which denies the preacher to turn minstrel.

If dirty necessity can authorize the poor parochial priest to keep his bear and fid-

dle, ſure elegant luxury, innocent tho' elegant, may, be the warrant of the dignified ſuperior, archdeacon of the dioceſe, and chaplain to the prelate, to amuſe the delicate ears of a town-aſſembly, and ſhew the dignity of muſical expreſſion.

If the command and influence be reſiſtleſs; if ſighs will heave the faireſt boſoms; and tears waſh off in ſtreams the crimſon from the faſhionable cheek; is it the object that ſhould be accuſed? 'tis nature. The world will join the fair exclaimer, when ſhe requires why this profuſion of all elegance, theſe beauties of the body and the mind; the eye that languiſhes, the wit that wounds, the voice that charms; why theſe, and more were laviſhed on one perſon, and a whole ſea doomed to deſpair! He who would wound you with this ſhaft, reverend Sir, miſſes his aim, and is himſelf the but of ſcorn and indignation.

Might not the thirſty felon with as much juſtice ſay to me, when he beholds with

with envy the curled head of the cool nectar riſing to my lips, do you whoſe office it is to whip and hang, to torture and deſtroy the human ſpecies, do you indulge with drink and jollity? why ſhould I not! The provoſt and the preacher is a man; and it is not needful he ſhould carry into his chamber the ſtern deportment of his hours of ſervice.

You ſee I plead for you; man for man, provoſt for provoſt: preacher for preacher needs not: for who, that has the dignity of national rector would mind a paltry pariſh. I plead for you, and it is upon preſumption of your innocence: but I want art and eloquence; the *Aculeus forenſis* does not tip my tongue, nor have I the cuiraſs of antitheſis, or ſpear of metaphor: ſtand forth yourſelf, and ſtrike the railers dumb. Acknowledge, nay, and prove, that like themſelves you are not what you ſeem: quote for authority

your friends and flatterers; the ladies, your domeſticks and your country congregation: and ſtrike them dumb with wonder.

Am I deceived, or may you ſpare all theſe? Do not your *face*, your *dreſs*, your *manner* all declare your innocence? I think they do moſt plainly: and you ſhall give me leave, me whom no man alive will call your friend, to plead them one by one againſt the charge.

While I compare that delicacy and bewitching ſoftneſs of your manner, with the ſtern cenſure of effeminate principles; that gentle indolence with your ſevere leſſons of hardy virtue and induſtrious honeſty, I ſhall not quote the harſh apoſtle to you: I ſhall not ſay with his divine force,—*Thoſe who*— you know the reſt: but the ſeverity would be ill placed againſt you. Who lifts the ax againſt the pilfering proſtitute? we may be allowed to borrow figures from our common occupation;

we do not try for murther now, but *larceny*.

Is all this true, or do appearances deceive us? the labours of the toilet, do they laſt five hours? or is it nature has beſtowed on you in wanton favour what demands the thought and toil and care and labour, of leſs happy mortals?

Thoſe browes that riſe in the true ſweep of beauty, ſo cloſe, ſo delicate, ſo regular ſo jetty, has nature drawn the geometrick arch, and given no unform'd ſtar; beyond the out-line of the conſtellation. Has ſhe performed theſe wonders, or have you? Have you picked out the eccentric briſtles, and rubb'd the empyrean with the pumice? Have you pinch'd up the ſcattered parts, and form'd the ridge, and turned the circle? Has your hand made the plain that ſeparates their verge, the lawn between thoſe foreſts? Has nature given the raven gloſs and colour? or has *Jem's* black

black pomatum all its boasted influence? I allow there is something ridiculous in the labours of a parson's toilet, but there is nothing criminal: give them the *joke* to stop the torrent of their serious accusation, and cut off the dog's tail to save the scandal of repudiation; the worst repudiation that of principles.

The eyes with all their fire we must allow you natural; only the glances can be the effect of art: and who would spare the pleasing labour of squinting at Fidelio, that could in return lead hearts in chains at every glance; and ogle into souls.

The manly tinct that bronzes your complexion, envy must own is natural; but whether the light glow that on the gaudy days of revel and assembly blushes upon it; happy contrast and happily contrasted; whether or not the judicious hand, imitative of your adored and idolized

idolized France aſſiſts, I fear will remain long a ſecret.

Nothing is evidence in our court but poſitive. If the piſtol be found in a man's drawer, it proves no robbery; nor can it argue a deſign to uſe it, if any one ſhould aſk a known proficient where do you by your powder?

To trace your form throughout would be too dangerous; and to examine charms that cannot be reſiſted, were but to point the dangerous battery more to deſtruction. They who ſuppoſe ſtature neceſſary to perfection may be referred to you; where, whether perfect nature or not leſs perfect art, or whether both have joined their force to effect it the women own (and they are the true judges) that to be delicate and men muſt not be maſculine. Or ſhall we call to the ſupport of this ſelf-evident doctrine, that ſymmetry hides height;

height; or ſay as one, we both know, ſaid with Pliny.

Natura nuſquam magis quam in minimis.

I have done; and yet I cannot leave the ſubject: you ſee I look on you with woman's eyes; and for the women's ſake, you muſt permit me to enquire of you, where may be had the pearl powder which gives the ſnowy whiteneſs of your hand: and what unguiculator pares away the parchment edge to ſhew thoſe creſcents on the ſhelly nails!

Come boaſt it all, and wipe off the reproach that the dull world and your more dirty order would lay upon your application: If this be true, their cenſures fall of courſe.

You, ſay, the envious brothers of the robe, you who tax heads of colleges with lazineſs, does your own pariſh find the fruits of your more upright induſtry!—The ladies find it. Labour is labour, whether

whether the ſcene lie in the ſtudy or before the toilet.

You who tax them with the high miſdemeanours of cards and tea, of company and diſſipation; do you love routs, and mix among aſſemblies of the evening? —It were moſt abſurd to act otherwiſe. For what elſe are the labours of the morning? Accept this anſwer to their weak attack; for they diſpute your own. You ſay the cenſor mixes to obſerve: but if to laugh, and loll, and ſigh, and ſing, be to make up a part of the amuſement, I fear 'tis proved upon you.

You are then nothing of this ſour, ſevere, laborious, ſpirited, and maſculine Briton?—Yes, in your writings: And it is not neceſſary you ſhould carry the banter farther. To be happy, the firſt principal is to be eaſy. Labour is therefore an enemy to mankind: to be gay is to live: and the greateſt pride is delicacy.

Some ſhould be brave: but it is not the clergy. Some ſhould be drudges; but the prieſt is exempt. His buſineſs is to eat: his order,

Fruges conſumere nati,

have no buſineſs in the raiſing them. While you have been derided by fools, your wiſer fellows of the gown will bear you ſecret teſtimony, that you have been acting with conſummate policy: preſſing upon others the virtues needful in communities; that you and they, and the choice few who are in the ſecret, may revel in ſecurity.

Your's in all juſtice.

SWITHIN SWING.

LETTER V.

WHether the palliation of your fault which I have purſued in the laſt letter be received, or the firſt charge ſhall retain its full force againſt you, lies in your own breaſt ſolely to determine. One queſtion comprehends the whole; Are you the thing you write, or what you live? Confeſs and ſilence the vexatious clamour! This will become your rank and character: You owe it to the public, many of whom you have miſled; you

owe

owe it to our God: you owe it to your country. France ſhould be told this was a *Jeu d'Eſprit à petite Badinage*, and nothing more; and thoſe into whoſe remote countries her too univerſal language has diffuſed the poiſon (for ſo it is if it be miſunderſtood,) ſhould have by the ſame means the remedy.

This, Sir, is neceſſary: and there ſhall be no evaſion. Your country muſt be diſgraced or you be made ridiculous: own yourſelf a trifler, and prevent thoſe who will otherwiſe fix upon you indelibly a very different character.

Needs France be told, that you have miſinformed her? Let it be owned you did it purpoſely. Aſſume a merit when we expect you to confeſs a little fault: and tell thoſe who did but half underſtand your language, that they loſt the irony.

If you refuſe, worſe will be proved upon you: for facts are obſtinate, and thoſe which concern kingdoms are notorious. I own you will be obliged to violate truth once by this declaration: but it will prevent the world from being in-

formed where you have been guilty of a thouſand violations. To eat ones words, they ſay, is a hard diet; but it is now neceſſary to you: put on the beſt face, and pretend you do it voluntarly. 'Tis better than to ſhew the world you are crammed with them; a feaſt for popular luxury.

Give me your hand, and let us paſs together thro' the meanders of your firſt, and contradictions of your ſecond charge. I will conduct you ſafely thro' the courſe: but if you flinch, you muſt expect diſgrace and ruin. Firſt let us review together the general charge: and after the particulars. It is the character is of a people: and natio- characters do not change eaſily. The time is the preſent: for you have affirmed of the Britiſh ſubjects all the ill in your new piece which you had charged upon them in the old.

The ſubject is before us, and its perfect circumſtance. It is important: for the character of this nation, however you have trampled on it with your light foot, is moſt reſpectable.

You picture England your averſion, weak, effeminate, abject, and diſhoneſt:

France your idol, ſtrong, valiant, exalted, and honourable. Nay, where you are obliged to own that people have the foibles which deſtroy ourſelves, you ſay they have not that effect on them.

Now mark the events; and ſay how they confirm, or how they contradict your bold aſſertion. You know them: and you ſhould have done this juſtice unſolicited. It would have become you: it was required of you. You had traduced your country, and her ſucceeding conduct had declared how falſely and unjuſtly. You had the opportunity, for you have wrote again: ſpeak then, and tell the Britiſh public how, why, and by what influence, you was with-held from doing this fair juſtice to your country.

The ſtrength of France and England have now been ſeen in fair compariſon together. They have been weighed, and France has ſtruck the beam. The manners and the principles of the commanders, and of the common people have been before us in the ſame view, and why is the compariſon with-held? is it becauſe it would

would ſhew you had been miſtaken? Are you, can you be ſo deſtitute of honour, that you ſhould think your bluſhes of more importance than the glory of your country?

What have theſe French men done? are they not driven over the face of earth and ſea before your country's forces, and before the force of her allies? do not the pigeons fly before the Engliſh eagle? deſtroying themſelves to eſcape deſtruction! What has the brave and wiſe Oſborne done? and what has Hawke? have you forgot? or do you treat the notices of your country's ſucceſs, like the remarks of better men upon your looſe reflections: peep from behind a thicket, when there appears any thing you can wreſt from its upright purpoſe; but elſe declare you have not read them. O ſhame to truth and honour! unworthy your profeſſion! who ſhould ſo carefully have watched the glories of your country as you that had profaned its character?

The valour of your idols, how did it appear when SOUBIZE ſhould have faced the

the haraſſed Pruſſians? yet you are ſilent. You maintain ſtill the ſame exalted opinion of them as at firſt; and are ready to celebrate in odes him, whom the women of his country rally in epigrams *.

Do you retain your notions of their honour? caſt your eyes on RICHLIEU! princes and dukes of France: ſelected for command becauſe the braveſt; and entruſted in a ravaged province, becauſe the moſt honeſt of their country. When you have recovered the confuſion of Soubize's flight, look on the other; plundering an unoffending people, and while he ſent the millions to his private uſe, denying food and covering to his ſoldiers.

When you have reviewed this conduct in the enemies of your country whom you have extolled; caſt your eyes home, and ſee, for you ſhall ſee them, the actions of your countrymen whom

* Soubize apres ſes grands exploits,
Peut batir un palais qui ne lui coutera cher;
Sa femme lui fournera du bois,
Et chacun lui donnera un pierre.

you

you have deſpiſed. Look to the Mediterranean, and tell me what age has produced an admiral of more conduct than he, who, when he had diſpatched his cruizers after the intended reinforcement, lay with his great ſtrength before the ſquadron! then ſay, if hiſtory will help you, what nation has ſhewn the world an officer ſo brave as he, who in the Monmouth, a veſſel of light force, purſued, overtook, fought and diſabled the beſt ſhip in the navy of this boaſted France; and gave the world the ſingle inſtance of a FIRST RATE man of war taken.

No kingdom but England could have produced a man ſo brave as GARDNER; but purſue the ſtory, and you will find this England, your contempt, has yielded us, among that navy you inſult, another: for the lieutenant came in nothing ſhort of his ſuperior officers example. The occaſion has ſhewn theſe; and like occaſions will diſcloſe others.

Next read the ſtory of the later HUME, a name to be immortal: a commander who maintained his poſt upon

upon the quarter-deck till he had received nine muſket-balls: then with his ſmall remains of breath called together his people, reminded them that they were BRITONS; and bid them not regard his loſs, but fight the ſhip as long as ſhe would ſwim.

There ſhould be a vaſt ſpace between ſuch names as theſe and yours, traducer of this nation! between their virtue, and your unworthineſs! heaven and hell are not more diſtant. But I muſt drag you, hateful and hideous as the defamation of your country has render'd you, yet ſomething farther: and from particulars lead you to general obſervation.

Bluſh to review the preſent condition of your country; as proſperous as it is honourable: bluſh to ſee beggared and beaten France offering prepoſterous advan- for the money of ſtrangers, while we find readily at home double the ſums that the moſt extreme ſervice can require; ſubſcribed by men who (as much above the influence as the malice of you and the one man beſides who is like you) re-

verence their country: and placing their dependance on the wiſdom and virtue of thoſe whom you call fools and cowards, while they raiſe this, offer their all.

This muſt cover your face with juſt confuſion; but to break your heart, ſee, for it is moſt obvious, the preſent proſpect that is before Britain. We are unanimous at home; and ſtrong, and feared abroad. In Germany certain conqueſt waits on us, and in America 'tis ſcarce leſs ſure. Even in the eaſt we hope we are not defenceleſs.

This is our ſtate abroad: and all the time at home we are under the conduct of a man whom the univerſal voice acknowledges born for our glory; of one as much above your quack panegyrick, as your country is above your ſatire; and who, loving his country better than himſelf, cannot but deſpiſe you while you attempt to praiſe him.

Your's, with the like opinion,

SWITHIN SWING.

LET-

LETTER VI.

The Eſtimator's rational puniſhment.

THO' I hear all, from the ſupreme in office to the convict, ſpeak of you with the ſame diſguſt; few talk of puniſhment. There is not one but owns you have deſerved it; not one but will moſt freely join with me that you are your country's worſt, tho' moſt ineffectual enemy: but ſuch is the humanity of Britons, they will paſs by the toad, bloated with poiſon, when they know it cannot hurt them.

In the mean time, you, miſtaking their compaſſion for applauſe, and their contempt for approbation, wrap yourſelf up in the cloak of your wide vanity, and tell us of the honours you have received at home, and abroad; from your enemies, and friends.

What are theſe honours?—I do not aſk their name; for you have blazed that fully; but their nature? and what degree of glory is it you reap from them. You tell us the impreſſions of

your book and numbers of its converts: Weak man! it has not gone thro' half the editions of ONANIA: nor, have you ſo many admirers as ELIZABETH CANNING.

You boaſt of its tranſlations into other languages! your friends the French, no doubt, would do you honour: for you have tried moſt heartily to do them ſervice. If you would know how the impartial think of you, read the Dutch advertiſement of that edition. Then get ſome ſpy to take the odium off your name, and own it.

Would you know how your vain imagination came to be flattered with a ſeventh edition? beſide what your bookſeller may whiſper in your ear, I ſhall remind you, that altho' Britain be not as you have repreſented, baſe and mean, it is a frivolous age among the men of leiſure; and your frivolous book ſuited it.

But while theſe read and ſmile, let us caſt an eye together on thoſe who are more intereſted and more important;

upon

upon the great and good whom you have inſulted and caluminated. What if in honeſt vengeance they ſhould take it into their heads to think of penalty and reparation? you have not bones to bear the firſt, nor is the latter poſſible in nature.

Suppoſe they ſhould reſolve to take only the tythe of what is due to juſtice; and take it all in kind; the clergy to ſtrip you of the robe you wear ſo unhandſomely; the navy to return the keel-hawling! the officers the gauntlet! and when they turned you over to my care, thus crop'd and duck'd and laſh'd, and marked with every brand of infamy, what could you expect from me half-hanged, half-drown'd, half-flead, as you would come into my hands?

Sir, I ſhould ſhew you that a hangman has compaſſion: though you have ſhewn the world a parſon has not. Inſtead of cutting out your tongue, I ſhould remit you to the ſenſe which your own heart would by that time, nay does, I think, by this time entertain,

of

of its unworthy conduct; inſtead of the contempt of ſending you to France; a worthy preſent for your favourite nation; I ſhould do what perhaps your diocefan (for I do not know a worthier) now will: confine you to your parith, forbid you white gloves and grey powder, and compel you to read the ſervice conſtantly: but your curate ſhould preach.

Thus, ſir, I take my leave of you; and like the wet ſailor ſhrinking from the ſhrowds, enjoy my reſpite from the painful office of accompanying you. That ſuch juſt notice ſhould be taken of your continued inſults on your country was moſt needful: and I have done it, though it be out of the way of my profeſſion, becauſe there is no other character but is above your level.

Your's, with the moſt true contempt,

SWITHIN SWING.

Rope-Alley, Newgate-Street,
April 27th, 1758.

FINIS.